

Training 4-2: Assessments & High School Diploma Requirements



Welcome to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's training module on the Private School Choice Programs. We will refer to the Private School Choice Programs as "Choice" or "Choice program" throughout this training. The Choice program is governed by Wis. Stat. §§ 119.23 and 118.60, as well as Wis. Admin. Codes ch. PI 35 and 48. Provisions of this training module are subject to statutory and rule changes.

This training module will discuss assessments and high school diploma requirements.

Student Testing

- Choice schools are required to administer the following assessments each year to their Choice students.
 - Wisconsin Forward Exam for English Language Arts and Mathematics for grades 3-8.
 - Wisconsin Forward Exam for Science for grades 4 and 8.
 - Wisconsin Forward Exam for Social Studies for grades 4, 8 and 10.
 - ACT Aspire™ for 9th and 10th grade.
 - The ACT® with Writing for 11th grade.

The following list identifies the subject areas and grade levels for which Choice students are required to be tested annually. This list includes:

- The Wisconsin Forward Exam for English language arts and mathematics for students in grades 3-8
- The Wisconsin Forward Exam for Science for students in grades 4 and 8
- The Wisconsin Forward Exam for Social studies for students in grades 4, 8 and 10
- The ACT Aspire for students in grades 9 and 10
- The ACT with Writing for students in grade 11

DPI will pay the cost of Choice students taking the assessments. The school may also choose to have non-Choice students complete the assessments. However, the school will be required to pay for the assessments for non-Choice students. DPI will provide the cost for testing non-Choice students in advance so the school can decide if they would like to test non-Choice students.

For additional information on the required assessments, please see the assessments webpage.

Schools with fewer than 20 choice pupils in grades 3 to 12

- Schools that have fewer than twenty choice students in grades 3 to 12 are not required to administer the state examinations (Wisconsin Forward Exam, ACT Aspire, ACT with Writing).
- Schools with twenty or more Choice students in grades 3 to 12 are required to administer all of the state mandated assessments.

The assessment requirement is waived for the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, or MPCP, students if a school has fewer than 20 students in the MPCP in grades 3 to 12. The assessment requirement is waived for the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program, or WPCP, and Racine Parental Choice Programs, or RPCP, students if a school has fewer than 20 students in grades 3 to 12 in the WPCP and RPCP combined.

For schools with fewer than 20 Choice pupils in grades 3 to 12 that elect to not test their Choice students, DPI will still report the number of students participating in the Choice program at the school as well as the number of students that were or were not tested. This will be reported in the test results on DPI's assessments website and on the school's report card.

Parental Opt Out

- If a parent or guardian elects to excuse their child from testing, the school is required to maintain written documentation of the parent's request and to honor that request by not requiring the student to complete the assessment.
- School personnel do not have the authority to excuse students from testing without parental approval.
- School level reports will indicate the total number of students, the number of students that have completed testing and the number of students that have not been tested.

Parents or guardians who wish to excuse their child from testing are allowed to do so. Schools should receive written documentation from parents or guardians and maintain this information at the school level. School level reports on DPI's assessments webpage and on the school's report card will indicate the number of students in the school and will identify the number of students that tested as well as the number who were opted out.

Assessment Contact

- DPI contact for testing questions:
 - Duane Dorn
Office of Student Assessment
WI Department of Public Instruction
duane.dorn@dpi.wi.gov
608-267-1069

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Any assessment related questions for choice schools should be directed to Duane Dorn in the Office of Student Assessment.

High School Diplomas

- Schools with grades 9-12, must issue a high school diploma or certificate to each Choice student who satisfactorily completes the course of instruction and any other requirements necessary for high school graduation.

High schools serving Choice students must issue a high school diploma or certificate to each Choice student who satisfactorily completes the course of instruction and any other requirements necessary for high school graduation.

High School Diplomas Criteria

- The governing body of each school must develop a policy specifying criteria for granting a high school diploma to choice students. The criteria must include:
 - Academic performance;
 - Recommendations of teachers; and
 - Successful completion of the civics test required under Wis. Stat. 118.33 (1m)(a).
- The school may not grant a high school diploma to any choice student unless the student has satisfied the criteria.

Each school must develop a policy for granting a high school diploma to choice students. The criteria must include academic performance, teacher recommendations, and successful completion of the required civics test. The high school diploma may not be granted unless the student has satisfied the criteria.

Civics Exam Requirement

- Wis. Stat. 118.33(1m) states that Choice schools may not grant a high school diploma to any pupil unless the pupil successfully takes a civics test comprised of 100 questions that are identical to the 100 questions that may be asked of an individual during the process of applying for U.S. citizenship by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.
- The test may be completed by students anytime between 9th and 12th grade.
- Schools are responsible for the format and date of the exam.

Choice schools are required to administer a civics test as a requirement for graduation. The test is required to be 100 items long and consist of the 100 questions that may be asked of an individual applying for US citizenship by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services. See the resources link in the top right of the training screen for a link to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services website, which has the required 100 questions and other resources for preparing for the exam.

The test may be completed at any time between the 9th and 12th grade. Each individual school is responsible for the administration and oversight of the exam. DPI does not administer this exam.

Civics Exam Requirement (cont.)

- Each pupil must correctly answer at least 65 of the questions.
- Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as defined under Wis. Stat. 115.787, must complete the exam to receive a diploma, but are not required to meet the benchmark of 65 correct answers.
- A limited-English proficient pupil, as defined in Wis. Stat. 115.955 (7), is allowed to take the civics test in the pupil's language of choice.
- Students are also allowed to re-take the exam until they pass.

Students are required to correctly answer at least 65 of the questions on the exam. However, students with an Individual Education Plan are required to complete the exam but are not required to meet the benchmark of 65 correct answers.

Limited English proficient pupils are allowed to complete the test in the pupil's language of their choice.

Also, students are allowed to re-take the assessment until they pass.

Civics Exam Requirement (cont.)

- This test must be completed by all students at the school, not just Choice students.
- A student may **not** opt out of the civics test requirement.

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The civics exam requirement applies to all students at all Choice schools. Both choice and private pay students are required to complete the exam as a condition of graduation. Students may not opt out of completing the requirement. Further, the test must be taken even if there are less than 20 Choice pupils at the school.

Questions

Website: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs>

Email: privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov

Phone: 1-888-245-2732 ext. 3



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If you have any questions about the information discussed in this training, please see the Private School Choice Programs homepage. The left menu bar of the Private School Choice Programs homepage has resources for both schools and parents.

Choice schools may also contact the Choice team at privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov, or call the toll-free number at 1-888-245-2732, extension 3 with questions.